

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 240

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 6094

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINC, PINT, MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: ACTING PRESIDENT PLANS TO APPOINT CHAU SAU AS PRIME
MINISTER

1. I MET WITH ACTING PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY AT HIS REQUEST
MORNING APRIL 10. HE ASKED WHETHER I WAS AWARE OF THE
RAPIDLY DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION AROUND PHNOM PENH.
HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED KC POSITIONS OPPOSITE CAPITAL
ON EAST BANK OF MEKONG, WITHDRAWAL OF FANK NEAR AMMUNITION
DEPOT, KC BREACH OF FANK LINES IN NORTHWEST AREA NEAR
POCHENTONG AIRPORT AND PRESSURE ON NORTHERN SECTOR ON
ROUTE 5. I SAID I HAD BEEN BRIEFED EARLIER IN THE MORNING
ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

2. ACTING PRESIDENT THEN SAID THAT HE IS THINKING OF
APPOINTING CHAU SAU, HEAD OF OPPOSITION DEMOCRATIC
PARTY, AS PRIME MINISTER BECAUSE CHAU SAU HAS PLAN FOR
BRINGING ABOUT AN IMMEDIATE CONTACT WITH OTHER SIDE
TO BRING WAR TO AN END "IN HUMANITARIAN MANNER".
WHAT DID I THINK OF IT, ACTING PRESIDENT ASKED. I
REPLIED THAT IT IS NOT MY ROLE TO INJECT MYSELF INTO
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE. I SAID I WAS INTERESTED
IN KNOWING KHMER GOVERNMENT DECISIONS AND NOT MERE
RUMINATIONS. IF HE WANTED TO INFORM ME OF PRECISE
KHMER DECISIONS, I WOULD REPORT THEM FORTHWITH TO
WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, DECISIONS ON WHO SHOULD BE
PRIME MINISTER AND WHAT ACTIONS GKR WISHES TO TAKE

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VIS-A-VIS KHMERS ON OTHER SIDE WAS ENTIRELY UP

TO GKR. I POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS LATE IN THE GAME
AND THAT I REMAINED AT HIS DISPOSAL TO TRANSMIT ANY
MESSAGES HE WISHES ME TO CONVEY THROUGH MY CHANNELS.

3. ACTING PRESIDENT SAID LONG BORET AND HIS CABINET
ARE UNREALISTIC IN ASSESSMENT OF FANK'S MILITARY
SITUATION. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT LONG BORET
PLANNED TO DO BUT HE (SAUKHAM KHOY) WILL CALL CABINET
TOGETHER WITHIN NEXT FEW HOURS TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO.
IN HIS OPINION, ONLY COURSE OF ACTION OPEN TO GKR
IS TO HAVE LONG BORET STEP DOWN, APPOINT CHAU SAU
AS PRIME MINISTER AND GIVE HIM MANDATE TO FIND A WAY TO
ARRANGE A "HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION" TO THE CONFLICT.

4. HE PROMISED TO KEEP ME ADVISED IF THERE SHOULD
BE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN COURSE OF THE DAY.
DEAN

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